Amendments to the Claims

1. (currently amended) A method for agglomerating difficult to bind hematite ore comprising interfering elements ~~particulate material comprising: rendering the surface of the particulate material negative;~~ which comprises adding to the hematite ore ~~adding to the particulate material~~ a binding effective amount of a polymeric binder,; and a binding enhancing effective amount of a chelating agent, and forming the ~~particulate material~~ hematite ore into agglomerates.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said polymeric binder is guar, guar derivatives, carboxymethyl guar, hydroxypropyl guar, carboxymethylhydroxypropyl guar, modified starch, starch derivatives, carboxymethyl starch, pregelatinized starch, alginates, pectins, polyacrylamides and derivatives thereof, polyacrylates and copolymers thereof, polyethyleneoxides, cellulose derivatives and salts thereof, carboxymethyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethylhydroxyethyl cellulose, methylhydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethyldihydroxypropyl cellulose, xanthan gum, dairy wastes, wood related products, lignin, or mixtures thereof.

3. (currently amended)The method of claim 1, wherein the chelating agent is selected from the group consisting of ~~step of rendering includes adding to the particulate material~~ sodium citrate, ~~acrylate dispersants, other salts of mono-, multi carboxylic acids, phosphates, non-ionic water soluble polymers, guar, starch, non-ionic polyacrylamides/acrylates, non-ionic celluloses, methyl/ethyl cellulose, or~~, tetra-sodium EDTA, ether sequestering agents, oxalates, and mixtures thereof.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the- chelating agent is ~~step of rendering includes adding~~ sodium citrate ~~to the particulate material~~ and the polymeric binder is an alkali metal salt of carboxymethyl cellulose.

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5. (canceled)

6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 which ~~, further comprising~~ comprises adding to hematite ore a material selected from the group consisting of ~~the particulate material~~ sodium carbonate, ~~and~~ caustic, and mixtures thereof.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, ~~wherein the particulate material is iron ore, the polymeric binder is sodium carboxymethyl cellulose,~~ the binding effective amount of sodium carboxymethyl cellulose ranges from about 0.005% to about 0.2% based on the weight of hematite~~iron~~ ore ranging from about 0.1 lb/ton to about 4.5 lbs/ton, the amount of sodium carbonate ranges from about 0.005% to about 0.07% based on the weight of the iron ore ranging from about 0.1 lb/ton to about 1.5 lbs/ton, the amount of caustic ranges from about 0.005% to about 0.05% based on the weight of the iron ore ranging from about 0.1 lb/ton to about 1.1 lb/ton, ~~the step of rendering includes adding sodium citrate to the iron ore,~~ and the amount of sodium citrate ranges from about 0.005% to about 0.1% based on the weight of the iron ore ranging from about 0.1 lb/ton to about 2.2 lbs/ton.

Claims 9-16 (canceled)

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 1~~0~~, wherein the interfering elements are sulfur, manganese, ferrous hydroxides, Ca^{2+} ions, Mg^{2+} ions or mixtures thereof.

Claims 18-23 (canceled)

24. (currently amended) The method of claim 1~~1~~8, wherein the iron ore is from Venezuela, Brazil or Canada.

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25. (currently amended) A method for agglomerating difficult to bind particulate hematite ore which comprises ~~particulate material comprising:~~
adding to the oreparticulate ~~material~~ a binding effective amount of a polymeric binder, sodium carbonate and sodium citrate; and forming the particulate material into agglomerates.

26. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein said polymeric binder is guar, guar derivatives, carboxymethyl guar, hydroxypropyl guar, carboxymethylhydroxypropyl guar, modified starch, starch derivatives, carboxymethyl starch, pregelatinized starch, alginates, pectins, polyacrylamides and derivatives thereof, polyacrylates and copolymers thereof, polyethyleneoxides, cellulose derivatives and salts thereof, carboxymethyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethylhydroxyethyl cellulose, methylhydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethyldihydroxypropyl cellulose, xanthan gum, dairy wastes, wood related products, lignin, or mixtures thereof.

27. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the polymeric binder is an alkali metal salt of carboxymethyl cellulose.

28. (canceled)

29. (canceled)

30. (original) The method of claim 25, further comprising adding caustic to the particulate material.

31. (original) The method of claim 30, wherein ~~the particulate material is iron ore,~~ the polymeric binder is sodium carboxymethyl cellulose, the binding effective amount of sodium carboxymethyl cellulose ranges from about 0.005% to about 0.2% based on the weight of iron ore ranging from about 0.1lb/ton to about 4.5 lbs/ton, the amount of sodium carbonate ranges from about 0.005% to about

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0.07% based on the weight of the iron ore ranging from about 0.1 lb/ton to about 1.5 lbs/ton, the amount of caustic ranges from about 0.005% to about 0.05% based on the weight of the iron ore ranging from about 0.1 lb/ton to about 1.1 lb/ton, and the amount of sodium citrate ranges from about 0.005% to about 0.1% based on the weight of the iron ore ranging from about 0.1 lb/ton to about 2.2 lbs/ton.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising adding bentonite to the particulate material.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the amount of bentonite is up to about 0.22%.

Claims 34-39 (canceled)

40. (currently amended) A method for agglomerating difficult to bind particulate hematite ore comprising interfering elements~~material comprising:~~ which comprises adding to said ore
~~adding to the particulate material~~ a binding effective amount of an inorganic binder and at least one chelating agent~~sodium citrate~~; and forming the particulate material into agglomerates.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the inorganic binder is bentonite.

42. (canceled)

43. (canceled)

44. (previously presented) The method of claim 40, further comprising adding to the particulate material sodium carbonate and caustic.

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45. (canceled)

46. (canceled)

47. (currently amended) The method of claim 4045, wherein the ~~step of~~ chelating ~~includes adding to the particulate material~~ agent is selected from the group consisting of sodium citrate, tetra-sodium EDTA, ether sequestering agents, oxalates, or mixtures thereof.

48. (canceled)

49. (canceled)

50. (canceled)

51. (currently amended) The method of claim 4045, further comprising adding to the ~~particulate material~~ ore an additive selected from the group consisting of sodium carbonate, ~~and~~ caustic and mixtures thereof.

52. (currently amended) The method of claim 4045, wherein the interfering elements are sulfur, manganese, ferrous hydroxides, Ca^{2+} ions, Mg^{2+} ions or mixtures thereof.

Claims 53-60 (canceled)

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